



SPECIAL MEETING

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

*The Board of Directors conducted this meeting in accordance with
California Government Code section 54953.*

DRAFT MINUTES

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA
REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

President Kishimoto called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 1:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Karen Holman, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Yoriko Kishimoto, Margaret MacNiven, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, Controller Mike Foster, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Loana Lumina-Hsu, and Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson

President Kishimoto announced this meeting is being held in accordance with Government Code section 54953. The public has the opportunity to comment on the agenda, and the opportunity to listen to this meeting through the internet or via telephone. This information can be found on the meeting agenda, which was physically posted at the District's Administrative Office, and on the District website.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

BOARD BUSINESS**1. Draft Report and Recommendations on the Financial and Operational Sustainability Model (FOSM) Refresh (R-23-139)**

General Manager Ana Ruiz provided background on the original 2015 Financial and Operational Sustainability Model (FOSM) and explained the FOSM Refresh builds off the original FOSM and incorporates new programs and needs, such as Wildland Fire Resiliency and Climate Sustainability, and bolsters existing programs and projects, including the Interpretive and Educational and Volunteer Programs, Trail Stewardship, and Vision Plan/Measure AA project delivery.

Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak introduced Baker Tilly Managing Partner Nancy Hetrick and Managing Director Andy Belknap who are working on the FOSM refresh.

Controller Mike Foster provided the estimated cost of implementing new positions as part of the recommended FOSM Refresh catch-up, with approximately \$4,000,000 in costs for salaries and benefits, supplies, and a one-time capital expenditure of \$400,000. The recommended costs to improve the Skyline Field Office and establish a full-service Coastal Field Office are already forecasted in the Controller's 30-year fiscal model. Mr. Foster stated the financial model confirms the FOSM recommendations, including the additional staffing, is affordable and sustainable over the long term. Mr. Foster also presented general fund cash flow projections through Fiscal Year 2023-30.

Director Riffle inquired if the District would have funds to also increase salary ranges to be more competitive and aggressive in the labor market.

Mr. Foster confirmed the District will be able to afford changes to the salary schedule.

Nancy Hetrick reviewed the key engagement objectives and shared the progress made since the October 2023 FOSM update. She provided an overview of the activities the Board previously requested of the consultants.

Director Riffle inquired if the consultants would further elaborate on the request to evaluate Measure AA progress and timeline to ensure delivery of commitments by 2044.

Ms. Hetrick explained it was incorporated in the completed work, but she will address it directly in the final report.

Ms. Hetrick summarized the recommendations by service line and the recommended staffing additions, including the near-term catch-up positions.

Mr. Belknap presented background information on prior staffing growth, on the leadership and organizational culture, and discussed the opportunity of increasing the decision making and autonomy of lower-level management to streamline workflow.

Director Kersteen-Tucker requested further discussion of the FOSM recommendations at the December 5, 2023 Board Retreat.

Ms. Ruiz requested the Board identify topics of interest throughout the meeting that the Board would then rank to identify the top two topics for further discussion to include as part of the December 5, 2023 Board Retreat.

President Kishimoto asked if the implementation plan is coming back to the Board.

Ms. Hetrick explained the next steps for Baker Tilly include preparing a final report that incorporate tonight's Board feedback and comments. The consultants will frame an implementation action plan for the General Manager and Executive Team, which will be influenced by the budget and the policy decisions made by the Board. The Board can identify policy areas of interest, which can be incorporated in the implementation action plan and added as an attachment to the final report.

Ms. Ruiz stated mid-year budget adjustments will be presented to the Board in January so the District can begin quickly proceed with implementation of the recommendations.

Director Kersteen-Tucker identified leveraging the District's self-regulatory authority as a priority topic.

Director Gleason requested an explanation for the project cycles increasing from the prior three year average to the current seven year average.

Ms. Hetrick explained changes in process and flow, the permitting process, and public engagement activities affect the cycle length, but the recommendations are intended to mitigate the effects. Baker Tilly will try to include in the report the factors that influence the project cycle.

Director Holman advocated for Public Access Working Groups and questioned if they increase project delivery time.

Ms. Ruiz explained it takes significant effort from staff to facilitate Public Access Working Groups, which results in less staff capacity for other projects.

Director Holman inquired if the planning and project delivery cycle and the timing for department project review is currently more sequential than collaborative.

Ms. Hetrick explained collaboration is occurring but there are opportunities to strengthen it by ensuring those in the back-end of the process are brought in early on to foresee and prevent delays.

Director MacNiven quoted the report regarding the inclination of board members to engage in operational dimensions and clarified the message is for the Board to remain at the policy level.

Ms. Hetrick explained the Board should ask questions to ensure they have enough information to make decisions but to recognize the capabilities of staff and route questions appropriately.

Director Kersteen-Tucker echoed Director MacNiven's comments and requested further discussion on the Board's oversight and decision-making role.

Director Holman noted the importance of creating a culture in which questions are not received as criticisms.

Director Gleason asked for clarification on the in-house design team.

Ms. Hetrick explained a position is proposed for the Engineering & Construction Department. Currently, design elements are outsourced, which leads to delays.

Ms. Ruiz clarified the in-house design team would be focused on parking areas and buildings.

Director Gleason asked if in-house design includes trail designs.

Ms. Ruiz explained trail design layouts and construction have remained and would continue to remain in-house. Outside engineering expertise is brought in as needed to conduct highly technical tasks, such as geotechnical reviews.

Mr. Belknap explained it would be helpful to have in-house schematic designs, versus full-blown engineering design packages.

Director Riffle requested adding the role of Rangers to the future Board discussion list.

Director Kersteen-Tucker asked if there is a need for an internal structure that focuses on agriculture.

Ms. Hetrick explained there is not a current need to have a specialized agricultural team. With the additional positions, the Land Stewardship department will have expanded opportunities to develop deeper relationships with the agricultural community.

Director Kersteen-Tucker explained there is a need to educate the public on the role of agriculture and its relevance to the region. She wants to ensure the District has the infrastructure to accommodate agriculture education in the future.

Ms. Hetrick explained that programmatic priorities will change with time and new information but there will be Board conversations regarding the timing and tempo of expansion. The FOSM recommendations are meant to be a roadmap that allow flexibility to make changes.

President Kishimoto noted the volunteer training program is a great opportunity to engage and educate the public on topics such as the role of Rangers and trail building.

Ms. Hetrick recommended developing the volunteer program to expand the ambassadors of the District.

Director Riffle requested clarification on the goal for the volunteer program and the potential costs and benefits.

Ms. Hetrick explained that the metrics for success of the volunteer program would depend on if the measurement was based on efficiency or public awareness and education.

Director Kersteen-Tucker asked if the Information Systems and Technology (IST) position recommendations considered how Artificial Intelligence (AI) may influence how the District operates.

Ms. Hetrick explained the staffing recommendations are catch-up positions to meet current needs. Positions will be added as the District grows and as new technologies and organization needs emerge.

Ms. Hetrick explained the consultants' next steps are to provide the final report and the implementation action plan.

Director Riffle asked if the implementation action plan will prioritize the recommendations.

Ms. Hetrick explained that the implementation action plan is an operational tool that staff will use to prioritize recommendations. Some recommendations will naturally occur sequentially while other recommendations will need to be prioritized by staff.

Director Riffle inquired about the criteria for the prioritization of recommendations.

Ms. Ruiz explained staff will return in January with recommendations for the first set of implementation items. There will be a second set included as part of the Capital Improvement and Action Plan for next year's budget.

Director Holman asked if the implementation action plan provides an opportunity for the Board to discuss their implementation priorities.

Ms. Hetrick explained that the Board will identify organizational priorities and staff can adjust the implementation plan and budget accordingly.

President Kishimoto noted that the report is the consultants' recommendations, but the District may proceed at their discretion.

President Kishimoto commented there are specific recommendations for new catch-up staffing positions and inquired if the consultants will provide recommendations after the two year catch-up.

Ms. Hetrick stated there is a general recommendation according to service lines, but the specific staffing positions will be brought to the Board via staff.

Director Kersteen-Tucker requested guidance for how the Board can articulate top priorities to the General Manager and inquired why there were no additional staffing positions allocated to the Public Affairs Department.

Ms. Hetrick explained there is no additional staffing currently needed. Public Affairs is operating well.

Director Kersteen-Tucker stated the District's interest and reliance in governmental affairs may greatly increase and hopes the plan accommodates future needs.

Ms. Hetrick explained forecasting future need will be incorporated into the final draft.

Ms. Ruiz noted that the District's evolving strategic approach to external affairs will inform staffing needs.

Director Riffle asked if a FOSM should occur on a reoccurring basis or if the District should develop the expertise to do this in-house.

Ms. Hetrick stated the District can treat it as strategic planning effort and do periodic check-ins to see if there have been major developments which may affect District goals.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested that FOSM updates be included in the General Manager's Board check-ins.

President Kishimoto noted the recommendations indicate the District needs to improve internal communication and inquired which department should take the lead.

Ms. Hetrick explained communication is a management culture and practice, but the District can implement however makes sense.

President Kishimoto identified improved internal communication as a priority.

Director MacNiven noted communication amongst staff is key as we expand. Director MacNiven supported Director Kersteen-Tucker's comments on public communication in relation to agriculture and the environment.

Director Holman asked if the consultants have observed any tools utilized by other agencies to inform the community of organizational activities or to measure public perception.

Ms. Hetrick explained there are survey tools and firms for hire. She noted that investing time and energy in building relationships is key to success for improved public perception.

Director Holman stated community engagement and partnership with the community is important. Director Holman asked Baker Tilly to number the recommendations with the corresponding Board question number so it is clear what recommendation relates to which question. She inquired if the consultants considered areas of expertise when recommending new staff positions.

Ms. Hetrick stated an attachment or matrix will be included with the final report to link the Board questions with the recommendations. Ms. Hetrick explained Baker Tilly focused more on capacity limits and job completion when adding staff positions. A specific area of expertise was only considered for the in-house design position within the Engineering & Construction Department.

Director Gleason expressed support for Director Riffle's comments on evaluating the Measure AA timeline. He echoed President Kishimoto's comments regarding project leads throughout the project cycle and emphasized the importance of identifying an approach to facilitate ownership and vision over a project. Director Gleason identified streamlined public input as a way to reduce

the project cycle length and suggested continuously receiving general public comments and advice, which can be applied to specific projects as they occur.

Director Kersteen-Tucker requested an opportunity for the Board to discuss and identify high-level priorities.

Director Riffle spoke in support of increased staff decision-making authority to improve throughput of projects, such as through higher purchasing authorities.

Director Gleason advocated for the agency exercising self-regulatory powers and further discussing the role of Rangers.

President Kishimoto asked for more information on the incorporation of technology and communication tools. Additionally, she expressed interest in growth and development for entry-level and journey-level staff.

Ms. Ruiz stated once the report is received, staff will determine how to implement the recommendations and will bring action and budget items to the Board for consideration and approval. Ms. Ruiz further explained that the first set implementation actions will be brought to the Board in January for approval, and another set of recommendations will be brought as part of the upcoming new fiscal year budget and action plan review process.

Ms. Ruiz stated she will send the list of the identified discussion topics to the Board to ensure all priorities were captured. The Board will then rank the priorities and the top two will be discussed at the upcoming Board Retreat.

Public comment opened at 3:23 p.m.

District Clerk Maria Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 3:23 p.m.

No Board action required.

ADJOURNMENT

President Kishimoto adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District meeting at 3:23 p.m.

Shaylynn Nelson
Deputy District Clerk